

First Aid – Tips for walkers



Image: © British Red Cross/Layton Thompson

Dealing with emergencies - General advice by the Ramblers

Dealing with emergencies

When dealing with an emergency it is important to try and remain calm and look out for any dangers to yourself, the injured walker and the remainder of the group. There are three conditions that immediately threaten life: breathing problems, heart problems and serious bleeding. If there is more than one injured person, go to the quiet one first, they may be unconscious and need immediate attention.

Summoning help

Use a mobile phone to call 999/112 and ask for ambulance or the police, then mountain rescue as appropriate. Send others (two recommended) for help if there is no mobile signal. Remember, even if your mobile phone has no signal make the call to the emergency services as other networks may transmit the call.

When call the emergency services remember:

- Stay calm
- Describe the nature of the emergency
- State the location accurately
- Answer any questions clearly
- Be patient. Your call will be prioritised and handled as quickly as possible.
- The emergency distress signal is six quick successive whistle blasts or torch flashes

When the situation is under control

Ensure the casualty is kept warm, dry and comfortable as far as practical. Do not forget about the rest of the group as they need looking after too. Think about the arrival of the emergency services and plan accordingly. Remember to ensure the scene is left clean and tidy. Also think about how you, or others, might have been affected. It is a good idea to follow the casualty's recovery. If a major incident takes place please report it as soon as possible to the Ramblers on 020 7339 8519. A major incident is defined as 'posing an immediate danger to life, where outside help is required to resolve the incident'.

Further information

For further information and guidance on leading walks and reporting incidents please go to; www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer or contact the Led Walks Officer; 020 7339 8519 or email ledwalks@ramblers.org.uk

Please remember that administering first aid does not invalidate the Ramblers insurance.

For further information about the Ramblers please visit www.ramblers.org.uk

This guidance is produced by the Ramblers and British Red Cross.

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First Aid - Hints and tips advice by the British Red Cross

Strains and sprains

Strains and sprains should be treated initially by the 'RICE' procedure. This treatment may be sufficient to relieve by the symptoms, but if you don't know how severe the injury is, treat as a fracture and seek medical advice.

- R – rest the injured part
- I – apply ice or cold compression
- C – comfortably support
- E – elevate the injured part

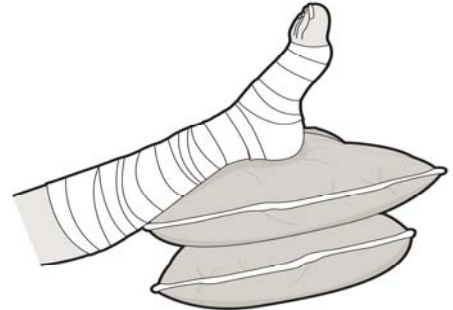


Image: © The British Red Cross

Heart attack

A heart attack is one of the most common life-threatening heart conditions in the UK.

1. Ensure they are sitting e.g. leaning against a tree or the legs or back of another walker and dial 999 (or 112)
2. Offer them aspirin (300mg) to chew slowly
3. Give constant reassurance to the person whilst waiting for the ambulance

The person may have persistent vice-like chest pain, this pain may spread to their arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach

Shock

The most common cause of shock is severe blood loss. This life threatening condition occurs when vital organs do not get enough oxygen due to reduced blood circulation.

Signs and symptoms – a rapid pulse, pale grey skin, especially inside the lips, sweating and cold clammy skin

Treatment –

1. Treat the cause (i.e. if due to severe blood loss apply pressure on the wound)
2. Help them lie down
3. Raise and support the legs
4. Loosen any tight clothing
5. Reassure them, but do not give anything to eat or drink
6. Call 999 (or 112) and prepare to resuscitate if necessary

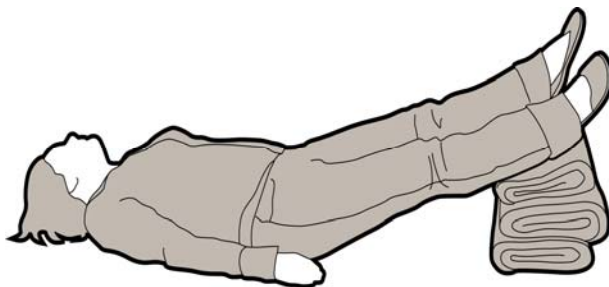


Image: © The British Red Cross

Hypothermia

Hypothermia develops when the environment is cold and the body temperature drops below 35 degrees c.

1. Call 999 (or 112)
2. Your aim is to warm them up gradually
3. Take them to a sheltered place, remove and replace any wet clothing
4. Wrap them in an emergency blanket or use any other insulating material, dry leaves, heather, remember to cover their head and put insulating items underneath them
5. Give them warm drinks and high energy foods

Bleeding

Blood loss can be serious and should be treated as quickly as possible. Your main aim is to stem the flow of blood.

1. Press on the wound with whatever is available to stop or slow down the flow of blood
2. Check whether there is an object embedded in the wound. If there is an object embedded in the wound take care not to press on the object, instead press firmly on either side of the object and build up padding around it before bandaging to avoid putting pressure on the object itself.
3. As soon as possible call 999 (or 112) or get someone else to do it. Keep pressure on the wound until help arrives



Image: © The British Red Cross

Heat exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused by an abnormal loss of salt and water from the body. It is more likely to affect people who are not used to hot and humid conditions and those who are already ill.

1. Call 999 (or 112) or get someone else to do it
2. Help them into a cool place in the shade, get them to lie down and raise their legs
3. Give water in small amounts frequently until they recover

Fractures

A fracture is a break or crack in the bone.

1. Immobilise the injured part
2. Try to support the injury with items of clothing to prevent unnecessary movement
3. As soon as possible call 999 (or 112)
4. For upper arm injuries encourage them to support the limb with their hand

Resuscitation (adult)

1. If the person is not breathing normally, you must call 999 or get someone else to do it. To check if someone is breathing normally tip their head backwards and look, listen and feel for breaths (Fig A)
2. Give chest compressions. Push in the middle of the chest so it goes inwards and then release (Fig B). Push at a regular rate. Continue until emergency services arrive, you become exhausted, when someone should take over if possible or the person shows signs of regaining consciousness, such as coughing, opening their eyes, speaking or moving purposefully and starting to breathe normally.

A



B



Image: © The British Red Cross

Recovery Position

If an adult or a child is unconscious but breathing normally, place them in their side in the recovery position.

1. Place them on their side with their head tilted back
2. If an infant is unconscious but breathing, hold them on their side, head tilted, as if you were giving them a cuddle, with their head lower than their tummy.
3. Dial 999 (or 112)

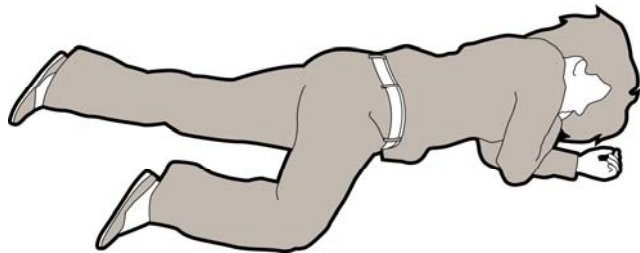


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The British Red Cross helps vulnerable people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. We train people in lifesaving skills, so they can respond to emergencies in their communities.

Contact us: 0844 412 2808 firstaid@redcross.org.uk www.redcross.org.uk/everydayfirstaid

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